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TEN YEARS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

by Arne Swabeck & John Liang

The historical greatness of a revolution must be measured by the extent to which it makes possible the transformation of society and propels mankind forward. By this measure, the third Chinese revolution ranks with the Russian revolution of 1917. This fall, the revolution celebrates its tenth anniversary. It was in October, 1949 that the Government of the People's Republic of China was set up at Peking. The succeeding decade has witnessed amazing changes in the life of this nation of 650 million people. In the remotest villages as in the urban centers the old has given place to the new. An impressive and fast-growing industrial economy has been created, side by side with radical developments in agriculture that have considerably diminished the age-long differences between town and country.

Landlordism and capitalism, sustained by Kuomintang-imperialist rule, have gone. National unification has been achieved and a central government has replaced the former provincial satrapies. Particularism has yielded to a new national consciousness. In place of exploitation and profit making, there is now cooperation for the common good. The inertia and stagnation of the old China have been overcome by a new dynamism whose characteristics are boundless confidence, self-reliance and hope. Moreover, China's revolution has radically altered the relationship of forces between the capitalist and non-capitalist sectors of the world in favor of the latter.

Bourgeois commentators on pre-revolutionary China played all the variations on the theme of a nation characterized, they said, by lethargy and fatalism. These characteristics reflected, in reality, the imprisonment and stultification of the productive forces in a backward society ruled by a reactionary dictatorship. Why should the worker put forth that extra effort -- to further enrich the capitalist employer? And the peasant -- should he bow his back even lower so that his landlord might become richer? The overthrow of Kuomintang-imperialist rule struck the fetters from Chinese society. The economic miracles that have since taken place testify to the liberation of the productive forces from the dead hand of the past and the release of vast human energies held dormant under the old regime. The progress in almost every field has astonished even the hostile bourgeois press. Cooperative labor has been applied to food-growing, and to industrial and other construction, on an unprecedented scale. Records set at one stage in industrial construction, soil improvement, public works, sanitation and cultural projects have been exceeded at the next stage. Especially outstanding was the organization of almost the whole rural population into Communes, accomplished in less than one year.

Members of an Indian government delegation visiting China in 1954 were struck by the speed with which vast irrigation canal systems had been built, and that was only the fifth year of the revolution. They cited the construction of the North Kiangsu Canal, which is part of the Hwai River flood control and irrigation complex. This canal, 420 feet wide and 100 miles long, was completed in 80 days by over 1,200,000 peasants working with very little machinery. Gerald Clark of the Montreal Star, only this year told of visiting a huge dam and reservoir near Peking that was completed by 400,000 "volunteers" in the remarkable time of 160 days. The same reporter remarked: "It wasn't so long ago that the Chinese couldn't make an aspirin. Now they make all the penicillin their hospitals need. The same kind of 'forward leaps' in a variety of industries...automotive, electronics, chemicals, railways...confront the astonished visitor wherever he goes.

In some ways, of course, China is still in the wheelbarrow stage, but also, in her desperate haste to catch up with the west, she has a cyclotron and blueprints for nuclear powered ships." Even U.S. News and World Report, not exactly noted for friendliness toward the new China regime, made these grudging admissions in its issue of December 26, 1958: "The Chinese have just constructed the world's largest open hearth furnace. They have built, in 58 days, their first ocean going cargo ship of 13,000 tons -- christened the Leap Forward. They have a modern factory in Mukden that turns out 4,000 precision lathes a year."

A more recent witness of China's phenomenal growth is James S. Duncan, a titled Canadian Tory, former chairman and president of the Massey-Harris-Ferguson farm implement company and now chairman of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. His reports from China appeared in the Toronto Telegram, beginning June 20, 1959. Here are some excerpts from one of his reports: "We visited two magnificent machine tool factories. The one in Wuhan, finished only in July of last year (1958), compares favorably with any machine tool factory in North America. We spent half a day at the steel center in Anshan. Operations at this center include all phases of steel production from iron ore mining to the finished product, including rails, structurals, galvanized and silicon sheets and seamless tubes...All the factories visited were splendidly built and equipped with the most modern in manufacturing plant."

The evidence of China's "Great Leap" from backwardness to modernity is accumulating rapidly from a variety of sources. The positive economic gains since 1949 can no longer be disputed. In the United Nations' World Economic Survey for 1958 we get the overall picture. It shows that the average gross industrial output for the whole Soviet bloc, including China, increased between 1950 and 1957 almost three times as much as in the capitalist world. Mining output alone increased more than three times as much, while the growth in agriculture was double that of the rest of the world. A breakdown of the figures for the separate countries shows that the rate of growth was most rapid in China. Between 1950 and 1957 Chinese industrial output rose by 276 per cent, agricultural production 59 per cent and mining output 226 per cent.

The U.N. figures doubtless came from official Peking sources. Press comment in this country alternates between an awed acceptance of the spectacular facts and strident charges of statistical exaggeration. Even if we allow that official claims may be exaggerated and discount substantially the figures given out by Peking, China's accomplishments are still impressive, surpassing anything that capitalism can show. That there is any deliberate and wholesale faking of statistics is extremely improbable. The economic growth of the new China is a planned growth. Planning requires honest control figures. Statistical faking would produce chaos and defeat utterly the economic plans. But perhaps Peking keeps two sets of statistics -- one for control purposes, the other for foreign consumption? What possible motive could there be for such double bookkeeping, since, inevitably, the truth must become known?

It must be noted, however, that percentage gains in industrial production and mining are based upon the exceedingly low level at which the economy stood ten years ago. The Russians had stripped Manchuria -- China's greatest industrial area -- of its factory equipment. The years of war and civil war that preceded the Communist takeover had brought industry in China proper to a virtual standstill. In Shanghai, Tientsin, Hankow and Canton -- the principal manufacturing centers -- factories had closed down for lack of raw materials. The new regime had to start virtually from scratch. Percentage figures of production increases during the

ensuing years thus loom extraordinarily large. But once this is allowed, the U.N. economic survey still testifies eloquently to the steep upward climb of China's post-revolution economy.

In 1958, the year of the "great leap forward," previous records were surpassed by tremendous margins. Figures released by the State Statistical Bureau for the National People's Congress, held at Peking in April of this year, specified the following gains in the vital areas of industry and agriculture: Steel production at 11 million tons was double the 1957 figure. Machine-tool production reached 90,000 units, three times the 1957 total. Output of electric power totaled 27.5 million kilowatt hours, a 42 per cent increase over 1957. Coal output amounted to 270 million tons, more than double the 1957 figure. The harvest of food gains came to 375 million tons, double the figure for 1957. Nearly 80 million acres of land were opened to irrigation. About 66 million acres were reforested. Some 6,200 miles were added to inland waterways and work had begun on dredging and widening the Grand Canal, silted up for more than 100 years. About 1,000 large industrial and mining projects were listed as under construction in 1958, while 700 were brought into full or partial operation, including 54 built with Soviet assistance.

The Communist Party Central Committee has since conceded that the figures given for the 1958 farm output were greatly overstated. Actually no more than 250 million tons of food grains were produced -- not double the 1957 output as previously claimed, but an increase of about one-third. The earlier inaccuracies were attributed to "lack of experience in assessing and calculating output of an unprecedented bumper harvest." In the reassessment only 8 million tons of the steel produced in 1958 were found suitable for industrial purposes; the additional 3 million tons turned out by home-made blast furnaces was regarded as useful only to meet "requirements of rural areas." Metal thus produced would in the future be determined by local needs and no longer figure in the state's economic plans.

At this point it is well to remember that economic planning requires an elaborate and painstaking system of accounting and statistics. Prior to the revolution statistics of any sort hardly existed in China. The new regime had to start out from practically nothing to create a reliable system, which takes time. Mistakes easily occur. But the reassessment clearly recognizes the necessity of accurate control figures. And the results of the 1958 advance, even with the downward revisions, still constitute the most impressive testimony to the vast powers of production unleashed by a great revolution.

Prior to 1949 heavy industry was found only embryonically outside the Japanese-built plants in Manchuria. In the phrase of one observer, it amounted to no more than a "modern fringe stitched along the hem of an ancient garment." The first task of the new regime was to restore the existing industrial fabric from the ravages of war and civil war and plan new developments. Since then an enormous industrial network has rapidly taken shape. The French journalist Robert Guillain, in his book, "600 Million Chinese," describes the industrial growth in the Manchurian cities of Harbin and Changchun and the huge iron and steel complex in Anshan. Guillain knew the old China of Chiang Kai-shek, the China of stagnation and decay. But now: "The sights were staggering." He tells of new workshops with "dozens and dozens of absolutely brand new ultra-modern machines, models of every variety, obviously representing the latest advances in industrial technology. At Anshan, the Russian equipment of the big flattening mill (a rolling mill) arouses the admiration of foreign technicians and makes even laymen

gasp. Automation is already in full swing. This is the realm of the robot machines. A real ballet takes place on a rolling metal floor around which the machines throw the rails to and fro almost without human intervention. A few workers, many of whom are women, sit there peacefully in an elevated cabin or an observation post, and merely manipulate a few levers. In a special workshop the ends of the steel rails are tempered in Russian electric converters which raise the temperature of the metal a thousand degress in one minute." A Belgian industrialist told Guillain: "As far as I know we have nothing like this in Western Europe."

Wuhan -- the tri-cities of Wuchang, Hankow and Hanyang, at the confluence of the Yangtze and Han rivers, 600 miles from the sea -- is being developed as the main industrial and educational center of the central China region. Here is the site of another great iron and steel project, the separate units of which are brought into production as they are completed. It is scheduled for completion in 1961, when it will have in operation 26 huge steel furnaces and coking ovens. Today, amid an army of bulldozers, graders, cranes and dump trucks thousands of men and women carrying loads in baskets slung from shoulder poles -- the ancient and modern side by side -- are laboring on an area of eleven square miles. The finished project, a fully automated heavy industry complex, will rival that of Essen in Germany's Ruhr Valley. In Wuhan, as elsewhere, most of the heavy equipment comes from the Soviet Union, but China increasingly is taking over the production of all equipment. At a tractor plant in Loyang, Honan province, 70 per cent of the equipment was built in China, also 80 per cent of the equipment in a mining machinery plant.

Examples of the new China at work, creating and enlarging whole industries, building railroads and highways, bridging mighty rivers, constructing dams and waterways, erecting factories for consumer goods, building houses -- could be multiplied almost at will. Taken together they testify to the enormous energies released by the revolution. China's development is supplemented by Soviet assistance. Indeed, the nationalized economies and planning of the two countries set up a centripetal force that pulls them closer together, thus increasing the international weight of the non-capitalist world. "Socialism in one country" is no more a possibility in China than it is in the Soviet Union. But the drawing together of the two countries on the basis of symmetrical systems and interests creates a powerful point of support for mankind's struggle toward socialism.

At the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. Khrushchev specified Soviet aid to China. Said he: "Our country is helping the People's Republic of China to build within one five-year period 156 enterprises and 21 separate workshops, supplying industrial plant to a total value of about 5.6 billion rubles." In February of this year, a new agreement was signed providing for Soviet assistance in the construction of 78 immense industrial units and power plants. In addition to this, the Soviet Union sends to China engineers and technicians to assist in the carrying through of economic plans and the training of Chinese specialists. All of this falls far short of an integration of the Russian and Chinese economies in the spirit of socialist internationalism. It resembles more an empirically devised international barter agreement in which China pays for Soviet "aid" with food and raw material exports.

Nonetheless, where the Soviet Union had to undertake its program of industrialization while totally isolated in a hostile capitalist world, China does enjoy a great measure of collaboration with the countries of the Soviet orbit. Moreover, China has the immense advantage of being able to pursue its program behind the shield of the U.S.S.R.'s military might.

Even this, however, does not exhaust the list of advantages enjoyed by the new China because of the proximity of the Soviet Union. There is abundant evidence that China benefits enormously from Soviet experiences both in the building of industry and the transformation of agriculture, including, especially, the monstrous bureaucratic bungling, arbitrariness and brutality of the Stalin period which did untold damage to Soviet planning. China can and does utilize Soviet planning methods and technology, thus skipping some stages in mass production development and going over directly to the very latest methods made possible by nuclear energy, electronics and automation.

None of these facts should be taken to imply the achievement in China of a thoroughly integrated program of industrialization, marked by an absence of disproportions, in which the separate parts operate in organic rhythm, perfectly synchronized like well-meshed gears. Such perfection will be possible only in the socialist society of the future. Until tractors, bulldozers and machinery in general are available in sufficient quantity, many projects must be carried out by human labor. Thus labor power is converted into the capital of the socialist future. China is not yet possessed of sufficient technical personnel or an adequate skilled labor force. While technical schools and colleges are working with all deliberate speed to overcome the shortages, the new China is carrying out in actual life the command of the Communist Manifesto to increase the total of the productive forces as rapidly as possible."

The development of an educational system adequate to serve the needs of a rapidly-developing society is proceeding apace. In China south of the Great Wall the greatest developments are at Peking, Lanchow, Wuhan, Shanghai and Canton. The educational effort runs the whole gamut of learning from grade school to the university. The previously-mentioned James S. Duncan, who visited China in the spring of this year, reports that there were 660,000 students in higher educational institutions in 1958 as compared with 190,000 in 1952. The enrollment in middle schools (secondary schools) had risen from 3,000,000 in 1952 to 12,000,000 in 1958. Primary school pupils numbered 86,000,000 in 1958 as compared with 51,000,000 in 1952. In addition, there are numerous spare-time and night schools for workers in the cities and on the land.

The prodigious effort in the field of education, in a country where illiteracy held sway just a decade ago, is dramatically illustrated by the growth of Lanchow, in Kansu province, as a great cultural center. This Mohammedan city is located in the very heartland of China. From a sleepy, dusty frontier town of 180,000 in 1946, Lanchow is now a city of more than 800,000 people. Educational and cultural institutions housed in the most modern buildings have sprung from the red earth. These include a library building, not yet fully stocked, with space for a million volumes. Professor J. Tuzo Wilson of Canada visited Lanchow last year and confessed that he was "staggered" by the volume of construction under way. Recording his impressions in The New Scientist, London, Prof. Wilson described Lanchow as a veritable beehive of activity. "Around the clock, thousands of workers dig ditches fifteen feet deep to contain water and sewer mains while power lines are strung in all directions." The professor was rather puzzled by the conspicuous absence of foremen or supervisors, let alone soldiers or armed guards. The only stimulus to effort that he witnessed was "strident music broadcast by loudspeakers hung on street corner lamp posts."

China was, and still is, predominantly an agricultural country, and it is in the sphere of agriculture that the most radical changes have taken place. Social change in the rural areas began with simple land reform, followed by the expropria-

tion of the large landholdings and their distribution among the landless farmers. These measures assured to the Peking regime the allegiance of the overwhelming mass of the rural population. In his book, The Chinese Economy, Solomon Adler reported that more than 300 million landless and land-poor peasants and dependents benefitted directly from the reforms. More than 115 million acres of land were redistributed. The individual peasant became the fundamental unit of Chinese farming. But the redistribution of the land created new problems. The individual allotment was often less than a half-acre of cultivable land, sometimes as little as one mou (one-sixth of an acre). While any comparison with U.S. farm acreage would be deceptive because of the higher intensity of Chinese agriculture, such land allotments proved far too small even for bare subsistence. Considering, moreover, the primitive techniques, the deterioration of the soil and the impairment of irrigation, the problem of rural subsistence assumed aggravated forms. Under these conditions, the development of mutual aid organizations and agricultural producers' cooperatives began to play an increasing role in ever larger areas. What they signified was that agriculture on an individual landowning basis was in a blind alley. The producers' cooperatives quickly showed their superiority over individual effort. There were greater yields per acre and better living for the participants. The cooperatives grew in size and extended into wider areas. In many provinces the cooperatives combined to form collective farms. Elsewhere, cooperatives and collectives existed side by side. The process of transformation began with a pooling of labor forces and tools. As it developed, land and livestock were also pooled. Thus was the foundation laid for the Rural People's Communes which began forming in the spring of 1958.

The manner in which the first Commune came into being has been explained by the Commune's own officials; also the factors responsible for its creation. Some of the features of this story of the Weihsien or "Sputnik" Commune, so named for the first Soviet earth satellite, were revealed by Peggy Durdin in the New York Times of February 1, 1959. This Commune, formed in Suiping county, Honan province, in April 1958 represented the merger of 27 collective farms, embracing 44,000 people in four townships. The collectives had striven for self-sufficiency, but they cooperated poorly. Those on the rocky hillsides hoarded their firewood and tried to grow water-thirsty rice; those in the river-crossed plains tried to raise ranch cattle and grow water-abhoring sesame. Now with better cooperation and planning the right thing is done in the right place and everyone benefits.

Formerly, joint irrigation projects failed because adjoining collectives quarreled over funds and manpower. Now such disputes are ended. In its first four or five months, special Commune teams built more than fifty reservoirs, dams and canals, irrigating 80 per cent of all the Commune's farmland. Work teams accomplished quickly what no single cooperative could do, such as constructing a primitive 150-kilometer wooden railroad, and almost abolishing the shoulder-carrying pole by putting ball bearings into wheels and building more carts, wheelbarrows and cable cars.

Within one week a work team covered with saplings a wild mountain area which its former collective of 270 households had never been able to reforest. The Commune claims that its new organization was largely responsible for last year's bumper harvest, allegedly several times that of 1957; for a while it held the national record for yield per acre. Later, Peking reported that "Sputnik" had turned a couple of village workshops and the artisans cooperatives into small industrial enterprises, and created a number of new ones. These were producing iron and steel, clothing, pottery, cement, fire bricks, chemical fertilizers, improved plows and seeders, among other items.

In early August of 1958 Mao Tse-tung visited "Sputnik" and expressed his conviction that the Commune pattern was the best form of organization for the countryside. A few weeks later, August 29, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist party recognized in a resolution that the establishment of Communes was "the logical result of the march of events." It was hailed as a momentous event "not just in China's history but in the history of the entire world." Meanwhile, a rush to form Communes had spread throughout the country. While the "cadre" or Communist activists were everywhere in the lead, much of the impulsion clearly came from below. By December, 1958 some 740,000 collectives or cooperative farms were reorganized into 26,000 Communes, embracing about 500 million people, 99 per cent of the rural population.

The practice of combining rural industry with agriculture, made possible by the Communes, was multiplied in a vast network of small industrial enterprises. These were based on simple technique, employed local resources and provided a variety of materials and implements for local needs. Among these were the much debated home-made blast furnaces. In the absence of the means of agricultural mechanization from the plants of heavy industry, which take considerable time to construct and put into operation, this miniaturized industry helped bridge the time gap.

The example from Suiping county indicates that the Communes arose, not because of a bureaucratic Peking decree, but from an urgent need to enlarge the too narrow framework of the collectives. They have provided that broader field required for the fullest mobilization and application of labor in order to increase agricultural production and cope more effectively with other problems of the economy. The greater size and multiple functions of the Communes make possible a more rational division of labor, better planning, and better execution of community projects. Unlike the collectives, which were economic units concerned with agricultural production under county administration, the Communes are self-governing socio-economic entities. In them are merged the collective ownership of land, local public works, livestock, heavier farm implements and local industry. Each Commune plans and carries out its own public works, its own agricultural, industrial, commercial and housing projects. It handles collective welfare activities -- medical, sanitary, educational, etc. -- and arranges military training. While government administration and Commune management are integrated, the Communes themselves are governed by elected councils in which the right to vote begins at the age of 16. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Communes may turn out to be the prototypes of the future organization of Chinese society.

The unbridled rage with which the establishment of the Communes has been greeted in the capitalist press points to the fact that a sharp class issue is involved. What stands out on the China scene -- as a result, first, of the collectivization of agriculture, and, second, the establishment of the Communes -- is the disappearance of the peasantry as a property owning class. This deprives world capitalism of a powerful point of support. The old landlord class has ceased to exist. The slow but sure advance of modern industry-type farming is obliterating the last traces of the old system. A new generation of youth is growing up on the land. While some among the older generation may yearn for individual land proprietorship, the youth, unfettered by tradition and prejudice, insist on moving forward. The peasant has gone. In his place stands the agricultural worker. China's villages, as such, have virtually disappeared, merged in the larger socio-economic units -- the Communes. Social life and relationships are not passive reflections of economic developments. Insistence that there could be no significant social and cultural advances without a corresponding advance in industrial

production and technology would mean paralysis for a revolutionary regime. A victorious revolution is compelled to set about the rebuilding of social life along new lines, even though the material base is far from adequate. That was the course taken by the Russian revolution. That is the course being followed in China.

Capitalist press descriptions of the Communes as virtual slave-labor camps where oppressed peasants labor for the glory of a totalitarian regime, where the sexes are segregated and where children are forcibly kept apart from their parents, were derided by the afore-quoted James S. Duncan in the Toronto Telegram: "From my observations many of the stories about segregation of the sexes, cruelty and forceful separation of children from their parents are vastly exaggerated, if not a complete distortion of the truth. Those who indulge in this type of sensationalism do the Western cause a great deal of harm." The Communes -- where the peasants themselves did not initiate the action -- were established by persuasion, says Duncan: "Following the party's policy, violence is never used. Persuasion and a recognition of the inevitable is the approach and the function of the cadres is to help the peasants realize that the communal life is the one which will lead them to higher production, which is in the interest of China, and ultimate higher living standards, which is in the interest of the peasants." Parents, Duncan reported, are not compelled to place their children in nurseries or kindergartens. Usually it is a necessity, because both parents work. "The nurseries and kindergartens were well run, well supervised and the children were apparently adequately looked after, happy and healthy."

Duncan's observation that persuasion is the method used by the Peking regime to carry out policies denotes the sharpest possible contrast with the regime of bureaucratic terror which in the Soviet Union, in Stalin's day, forced through a 100 per cent collectivization of farming by draconian measures in the teeth of ferocious peasant resistance. Even after the Communes had been set up in China, complaints by the people of overwork, lack of variety of food in the community dining rooms, etc., brought from Peking instructions to the cadres to ease the pace and pay due regard to the health and welfare of the Commune dwellers. The explanation for Peking's attitude is really quite simple. The Communist party regime has been riding a constantly advancing revolutionary wave in which the great masses of the people have not only welcomed, but demanded the most radical reorganization of social and economic life. Coercion is unnecessary where the people willingly cooperate. Moreover, there is not now a bureaucracy in China such as that in the Soviet Union -- a hardened social formation of a parasitic character, consuming an inordinate share of the national product, standing above the people -- a social formation that crystallized in a period of revolutionary retreat. The Peking regime is not a carbon copy of the Moscow regime. Instead, there is an administrative apparatus, whose lower echelons are close to the masses in both living standard and social outlook. The fires of revolution in China have not cooled. It is this fact, basically, that explains the relative closeness of the "bureaucracy" to the masses and its ready responsiveness to their needs and demands.

The foundation of the rapid growth of China's economy, as of its profound social transformation, was laid down through successive stages of development, beginning with the overthrow of the Kuomintang and the expulsion of the imperialists. Here was a pattern of "permanent revolution," the law of historical development revealed by Marx, elaborated by Trotsky and proclaimed by Stalin and Mao Tse-tung to be a Trotskyist heresy.

In the great dispute with the Stalin regime that arose out of the defeated second Chinese revolution of 1925-27, Trotsky wrote concerning the possibilities

of a socialist development: "This goal could be achieved only if the revolution did not halt merely at the solution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks but continued to unfold, passing from one stage to the next, i.e., continued to develop uninterruptedly (or permanently) and thus lead China toward a socialist development. This is precisely what Marx understood by the term permanent revolution."

When the third Chinese revolution made an end to Kuomintang rule and elevated the Communist Party to the position of power, the leadership continued to cling to its program of a "bloc of four classes." The provisional constitution adopted by the People's Political Consultative Conference, in September, 1949, provided for transfer of land ownership to the peasants. It assured equal protection of the "economic interests and private property of workers, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie." Economic construction was to be based on policies "of taking into account both public and private interests, of benefiting both labor and capital." The common program adopted did not project measures beyond the bourgeois-democratic tasks. Later, in the Korean war, the imperialist military assault and blockade compelled the party leadership to turn against its capitalist allies, nationalize the key branches of economy and mobilize the workers to save the revolution.

The first Five Year Plan, initiated in 1952, projected the following fundamental tasks: to lay the preliminary groundwork for socialist industrialization, to do similarly for the socialist transformation of agriculture and handicrafts, and to lay the foundation for socialization of private industry and commerce. In line with this, the program of industrialization progressed alongside of peasant cooperatives and collectivization, later culminating in the organization of Communes. These marked a new stage in the still developing Chinese revolution: they signified a qualitative advance for the mass of the people. This higher stage is the latest manifestation of the process of permanent revolution which continues to assert its power despite the deformations and limitations imposed on its unfolding by the Communist party regime. It springs from a dynamic mass movement that constantly generates new energy and ingenuity.

How have the economic advances in China found reflection in living conditions? The Chinese people made a revolution, not in order to provide interesting production figures for avid statisticians, but to improve their living conditions -- to eat better, to be better housed and clothed, to see their children educated, to experience the joys of culture. What does the Chinese revolution have to show here after ten years? Have conditions remained about the same or have they improved? As regards education, we have already indicated the enormous gains made on the road to the liquidation of illiteracy and the development of a cultured nation. A host of witnesses, from England, France, Canada, India, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Latin America, Africa, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon rises to testify. We won't attempt to quote them directly.

In the cities there have sprung up great community housing projects to reaccommodate workers whose only homes had been shanties, and to house the new and fast-growing labor force. These apartment homes are crowded. They are unpainted. Plumbing facilities are on a community basis. Yet they represent an advance over the dank hovels in which workers lived under the old regime. In the bad old days, thousands of people, men, women and children, died each year of exposure and sickness on the streets of the big cities. In Shanghai's International Settlement, in the heyday of the Chiang regime, trucks made their rounds each dawn,

picking up the bodies of people who had died on the streets during the night. The grim harvest, for that single foreign-dominated section of the great city, averaged 36,000 corpses a year -- 100 a day. In the new China no one lives or dies, homeless, on the streets.

So, too, everyone is clothed. The people's dress, as foreign visitors attest, is adequate and clean, even though plain and rather drab, which in fact it was before, except among the rich. But gone is the spectacle of people "dressed" in filthy rags, a feature of the old order.

Gone are mass prostitution and beggary. The immense floating population of rootless, indigent people is no more. A productive place has been found in the new society for everyone.

A public health and medical service, entirely free to workers, is aiming at the elimination of endemic and epidemic disease, with astonishing success.

In the great revolutionary shake-up, the age-old patriarchal family system, buttress of an outlived social system has vanished. This has led to the social liberation of women, who were domestic drudges and even chattels under the old order. Women enjoy full equality with men and their new freedom is written into the constitution and laws of revolutionary China. Women now are found in every branch of industry, including steelmaking. They get the same pay as men for the same work.

China's great cities show most dramatically the immense transformation. Peking's population has risen in ten years from 1,300,000 to almost 5,000,000. Here is what Duncan reports: "A visitor's first impression on entering the city is one of wide boulevards -- masses of uniformly and modestly dressed people -- noise and frenzied activity -- buildings of ancient and matchless splendor contrasting strangely with the latest in modern Chinese design. But the greatest impression of all is the almost unbelievable amount of building activity, which one can safely state excels that of any city of similar size in the world. More has been built in Peking during the past 10 years -- particularly during the last six years -- than since the beginning of the Ming Dynasty almost 600 years ago...While all this frenzied activity is going on in connection with the new, magnificent examples of Chinese imperial architecture in the Forbidden City and elsewhere are being restored to their ancient splendor and thrown open to the people who throng through them by the thousands on their days of rest or recreation." Duncan was especially impressed by the youngsters: "Everywhere one sees dozens of bright-eyed, round-faced children running in and out among the passers-by or playing and tumbling around on the sidewalks. The children of China are well cared for and treated with kindness and consideration."

The transformation of Shanghai, China's leading port city, matches that of Peking. Alongside the growing industries are immense housing projects for workers. This once gray, dismal slum with a gay imperialist facade is also being made attractive as a habitat of the working people. The Race Course, where Shanghai's foreign overlords used to disport themselves, is now a Park of Culture and Rest. Most of the movie houses and nightclubs have become cultural centers of the trade unions. The famed Shanghai Club (longest bar in the world and a liquor stock to match) is now a club run by the Seamen's Union. Several new parks -- there used to be only one -- have been carved out of the Metropolitan area. Thousands of trees have been planted. The new cleanliness of the city astounds visitors who knew Shanghai as it was before. The people feel Shanghai is theirs. They don't litter the streets

and parks -- although, alas! they still spit.

What about wages? According to Duncan, average monthly earnings of all city or town workers of both sexes, including everyone on the payroll, from the senior executive down to the apprentice, amount to $21 (Canadian). But rents are low, family apartments averaging $1.20 to $1.60 a month, with comparable prices for food and the simplest clothing. A stable currency helps guard the workers' living standards. The highest paid senior executive of any of the plants Duncan visited was the manager of a steel industry complex employing 75,000 workers. His salary was $137 a month. Teachers' salaries vary from a low of $20 a month to a maximum of $120 for a senior professor. All workers are pensionable at the age of 60 for men and 55 for women. When social benefits totally unknown in the old China -- pensions, medical care, etc. -- are taken into account, the average monthly wage of $21 represents a vast improvement over the former regime.

In the new China the air is charged with enthusiasm and the accent is on youth. Asked what he most admired in the Chinese people, Duncan replied: "Their unending toil, sense of unity and team work; their dedication and unselfish striving towards a greater China and their determination to reach and surpass the targets which are set for them. But what I admired most of all was the bright-eyed enthusiasm of the young people, Puritanical perhaps, but modest, hard working, dedicated and all looking forward with infectious enthusiasm to the bright new world in which they will be called upon to play their part."

The indomitable spirit of the new China is manifest in its marching song:

Rip holes in the sky --
    We'll patch them!
Crack the earth's crust --
    We'll mend it!
For we can tame oceans.
    We can move mountains.

There is the justification for the Chinese revolution -- if, as Trotsky said of the Russian revolution, you think it needs justification.

August 28, 1959

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New York, N.Y.
August 27, 1959

Los Angeles

Dear Jim,

We are enclosing for your information a copy of an article, "Ten Years of the Chinese Revolution," submitted by Arne and Liang for publication in the magazine.

With the exception of Tim, the resident PC members seriously disagree with the political line of the article. Our disagreement centers mainly on the question of the regime and in that respect we think the article fails to conform with the memorandum on the communes adopted by the convention.

Since a special political question is involved, the PC decided to consult with you in your capacity as a PC member before taking action on the matter.

The resident PC members are unanimously agreed that it will not be possible under the circumstances to publish the article in the forthcoming issue of the magazine which must go to press by September 12. Murry is making other arrangements for copy accordingly.

We wish to call attention particularly to the paragraph in the article beginning, "Duncan's observation that persuasion is the method used by the Peking regime..." The formulations in this paragraph go beyond study of differences between the Peking and Moscow governments as bureaucratic regimes. Chinese Stalinism is portrayed as something less than a bureaucracy through a series of favorable characterizations at the end of which the term bureaucracy is put in quotation marks.

Elsewhere in the article reference is made to impulsion from below in establishing communes. They are described as "self-governing" through "elected councils." A sweeping reference is made to "disappearance of the peasantry as a property-owning class." Differences between town and country are substantially discounted. Contradictions between China and the Soviet Union, which become aggravated by bureaucratic rule, are generally brushed aside through emphasis on the "centripetal force that pulls them closer together."

If the general line implied by these assertions should be confirmed as an expression of changing reality, the party would have to recognize frankly both what is new and what has been overthrown in our present basic position. The consequent political and theoretical conclusions would have to be drawn to the full. But first of all the problem requires more extensive probing for facts and deepening of the theoretical analysis.

We think that profound questions of this kind, where serious differences of opinion are involved, do not lend themselves at this stage to treatment in the press. It would seem more in order to submit them first for internal discussion and clarification.

As soon as you have had a chance to study the article we would like to hear from you on the subject.

Comradely,

Farrell Dobbs

FD/c
cc: Arne & Liang

Los Angeles, Calif.
September 3, 1959

Farrell Dobbs
New York, N.Y.

Dear Farrell:

This is in reply to your letter of Aug. 27.

On the procedural side of the question, the PC not only has the right, but also the duty to require that treatment of the Chinese question in the press conform to the Convention resolution which calls for a balanced treatment of the whole Chinese question. This certainly includes the question of the regime.

From this point of view, I fully agree with the position of the resident members of the PC in ruling that the Swabeck-Liang article should not be published in the press as a statement of party position; and that it belongs rather in the Internal Discussion Bulletin as the personal opinion of the authors.

As to the article itself, I disagree with important parts of what it says and what it leaves out. We had a meeting of the NC members to discuss this question the other night. Several others expressed disagreement also. It was agreed by all, however, that the points of disagreement should be aired in the Internal Bulletin and not in the press.

Fraternally,

JPC:jh

James P. Cannon

WHAT IS YOUR POSITION, COMRADES?

by Arne Swabeck and John Liang

The article we prepared for the International Socialist Review on "Ten Years of the Chinese Revolution" was found unsatisfactory by the entire Political Committee with the exception of Tim. PC members said they "seriously" disagreed with the political line. They also rejected or questioned certain facts embodied in the article.

In preparing the article, it was our aim to present, on the basis of the available evidence, a picture of the revolution and its enormous achievements as it advanced from stage to stage. Needless to say, we treated the subject, not as disinterested commentators, but as partisans of the revolution.

We are aware that important political questions were posed by our accounting of the accomplishments of the Chinese revolution. These include China's relations with the Soviet Union (aside from economic collaboration), China's relations with the capitalist world, but above all the nature of the Peking regime. It was manifestly impossible to deal fully with these questions in an article whose purpose was to convey a picture of China's enormous revolutionary accomplishments.

We set this forth in a letter to the editor, saying in part: "It was not possible, or desirable, to attempt in this anniversary article, giving the results of ten years of the revolution, a full, detailed and complete examination of the nature of the Peking regime. We did the minimum necessary to the essential purpose of the article." We further expressed the opinion that "a thorough-going article on the question of the regime in all its aspects is in order." We offered to undertake such a study.

Nevertheless, our article was rejected for publication. As a consequence, the SWP is the only tendency on the left which has nothing to say in its press on the tenth anniversary of the Chinese revolution, an event which ranks historically with the Russian revolution. We think this is most unfortunate.

The PC did not detail its objections. It merely stated them. Thus: "Chinese Stalinism is protrayed as something less than a bureaucracy through a series of favorable characterizations at the end of which the term bureaucracy is put in quotation marks." To this we reply that we were simply calling attention to the contrast between the manner of establishment of China's Communes and Stalin's forced collectivization. We added the observation that "there is not now a bureaucracy in China such as that in the Soviet Union -- a hardened social formation of a parasitic character, consuming an inordinate share of the national product, standing above the people -- a social formation that crystallized in a period of revolutionary retreat. The Peking regime is not a carbon copy of the Moscow regime." We attempted to explain the immediate reasons for this difference, while not attempting a thorough-going examination of the Peking regime. Since the PC apparently differs with our characterization of the regime, we think it should state wherein it considers us to be incorrect.

The PC took exception to our saying that the impulsion for establishment of the Communes came from below. It also objected to our description of the Communes as "self-governing" through "elected councils." For both assertions

there is a considerable body of supporting evidence. If the PC rejects this evidence, it should give its own view of the situation and the evidence on which it is based.

We made reference to the "disappearance of the peasantry as a property-owning class." The PC objects to this as a "sweeping reference." Very well! Let the PC explain how a class of peasant proprietors still exists in a rural society where "cooperatives" (collectives) replaced individual land ownership and the cooperatives are now merged in the larger communes!

There is another point of attack. Says the P.C.: "Contradictions between China and the Soviet Union, which become aggravated by bureaucratic rule, are generally brushed aside through emphasis on the 'centripetal force that pulls them closer together!'"

What are the "contradictions" to which the PC refers? They are not even indicated, much less described.

To arrive at a decision in a disputed political question, both sides must spell out their positions. Comrades of the Political Committee: WHAT IS YOUR POSITION?

Los Angeles
September 15, 1959

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE COMMUNES

by Myra Tanner

Apparently the entire National Committee now agrees that Communes represent a step forward in the agrarian revolution. If anyone wants to underscore this more than the PC draft resolution did, very good. I, for one, think this would be useful.

However, our defense of the Communes must be correct and it must be complete. The Chinese revolution, in this stage as well as earlier ones, needs defense not only against the imperialists but also against the empirical methodology of the Chinese Stalinists. This is the task of world Trotskyism. If we don't make such a complete analysis, it will not be made.

We Begin With Facts

The beginning of a Marxist analysis is an accurate grasp of facts without polemical exaggerations and distortions. Let's see how the L.A. draft resolution handles the facts.

In paragraph 3 the L.A. comrades say of the Communes, "the advance, by way of such collectives, is from barbarism [?] to civilization, from starvation to a living diet, from enslavement for women to equality, from small-scale peasant farming to large aggregates of labor on the land and in the crafts, from individual helplessness to mutual aid, from hopelessness to hope for millions of rural families."

All the earlier stages of the Chinese peasant revolution are wiped out in this lyrical song of praise for the Communes. The overthrow of the landlord class and the re-distribution of the land, the organization of collectives in 1955 -- all disappear in this amazing transition from "individual helplessness" to the Communes. Surely defense of the Commune stage of peasant organization doesn't require such a glossy distortion of history.

The Communes are a step forward insofar as they deepen the process of collectivization that was begun in 1955. Communes can increase cooperation and division of labor in agriculture. They can help to level the privileged layers of peasantry within the former collectives and reduce differentiation between collectives that emerged due to uneven obstacles in nature and uneven demands upon the labor of collectives.

Commune organization can facilitate, not "initiate," the organization of non-agricultural productive activity in rural areas, the crafts, small manufacture and projects requiring vast quantities of labor power such as construction of railroads, highways, dams, canals, etc.

Qualitative change can be effected in the position of women, already freed from parental domination and slavery by the revolution and guaranteed equality in law. Now the Chinese peasant woman, despite a lower material existence, can leap ahead of her sisters in advanced capitalist countries and win liberation from double exploitation, her participation in production in addition to her traditional household drudgery. The perspective of communal kitchens and nurseries can bring the Chinese peasant woman much closer to real equality.

All these advances are possible, though not inevitable, through Commune organization. And they are sufficient justification for supporting this stage in the Chinese revolution without attributing all progress since 1949 to the Communes.

Because some comrades tend to dissolve all earlier stages of the Chinese revolution in their enthusiasm for the Communes, the fact that the Communes were organized within a three-month period became an inexplicable mystery. Did this signify a spontaneous peasant upsurge? Or was it a bureaucratically imposed forced-march? This question loomed important in the early exchange between N.Y. and L.A.

The mystery disappears as soon as we remember that the qualitative change in agricultural relations began in 1955. It took a number of years to collectivize individual peasant households. Commune organization could never have been accomplished in three months without the longer struggle for collectives.

What Accounts for the Great Leap Forward?

Nor does a defense of the Communes against imperialist propaganda require that we further distort actual Chinese history by claiming their value is already proved in the "great leap forward" of 1958. In paragraph 4, the resolution claims, "The economic advantages deriving from the Communes have already been proven. The 1958 cotton crop was up 6 per cent. Work teams opened up 69 million acres to new irrigation...These and derivative accomplishments are due to the advantages of the new productive form of the Commune..."

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP only called for the formation of Communes at the end of August, 1958. Before that only a few Communes had been formed experimentally, the first in April of 1958, certainly not enough to account for the leap in production that took place in both industry and agriculture in 1958. One must look elsewhere for an explanation of the economic growth realized in that year.

To understand the reasons for the resurgence of the revolution, expressed in 1958 production figures, we must look beyond the borders of China to the opening stages of the political revolution, especially the explosive events in Hungary. The Chinese CP leaders reacted to that event as if they, instead of the Hungarian Stalinists had felt the hot breath of rebellious workers breathing down their necks. The CCP made the loudest and most vicious denunciation of the Hungarian workers. Thoroughly alarmed, the Chinese Stalinists took the Hungarian revolution as a warning. They saw the same symptoms of restless opposition in the growing working class at home -- a few strikes, the appearance of workers councils, demands for a voice in management, etc. And above all -- the shattering of the myth of the infallibility of Stalin raised a thousand questions -- which the CCP had trouble answering. Mao Tse-tung was compelled to announce his "hundred flowers" slogan.

There soon followed the "rectification" campaign which despite the current campaign against the "rightists," made some correction of earlier Stalinist errors. The rectification campaign contained first, a correction of the one-sided economic policy of the CCP. Without abandoning the "emphasis on heavy industry" the so-called "general line" was adopted, one aspect of which was the policy of "walking on two legs." This meant a greater sense of proportion in economic planning: the "simultaneous" development of heavy and light industry; of big and small

enterprises; of agriculture and industry; etc. The door opened to the fuller utilization of the bulk of Chinese labor, the peasantry, with the organization of small-manufacturing labor in rural areas. The pitifully weak industry of China could nowhere begin to meet the needs of the peasant economy. The peasants themselves had to produce their tools, fertilizer, clothing, etc.

The turn in economic policy also held out the hope that greater supplies of consumer goods would be produced.

In addition to a shift toward a more realistic economic policy, the CCP conducted a political campaign to overcome the growing separation of the Party cadres from the people. A struggle began against the "three bad styles of work" (bureaucracy, sectarianism, and subjectivism) and the "five bad airs" (bureaucratic airs, apathetic airs, extravagant airs, arrogant airs and finicky airs). The cesspool of privilege and higher income which gave rise to these "airs" was not touched of course. But undoubtedly the political atmosphere was improved.

The "two participations" movement helped. This was the system of workers' participation in management and the participation of administrative personnel in production. Semi-recognition of "workers councils" was conceded where they appeared. Production workers were given a voice, if only for the sake of better control, in the affairs of the factory.

The Xiafang movement was organized. In 1958 over a million "intellectuals" from government offices, production enterprises and educational institutions, were sent "among the people," to labor in rural villages as well as in the factories. Even army generals were told to serve, at least for token periods, as common soldiers.

Although I shall not attempt to evaluate it here, a fundamental change was made in educational policy, consisting of a merging of educational and productive activities.

Both shifts in policy -- the economic shift and the political changes -- yielded dramatic results in production. A new leap forward of the Chinese revolution became possible as hope in a new life, without privileged and rich was given new stimuli.

What the CCP Leaders Say

Certainly the principal spokesmen of the CCP do not credit the Commune organization with the 1958 leap in production. Chou En-lai, speaking to the 21st Congress of the CPSU in Moscow this year said, "In the past year, a big leap forward in industry and agriculture and a surging movement to set up people's Communes took place in China. The leap forward in industry and agriculture promoted the development of the movement for people's Communes," Peking Review, February 3, 1959. This is saying something quite different than the leap forward proved the value of Communes.

Po I-po, in an article on industry's tasks in 1959 (Peking Review, Jan. 6, 1959) attributed the 1958 leap forward, first to the rectification campaign. In 1958, he wrote, "the dreary situation in which a handful of people were relied upon to run industry was brought to an end and a new vigorous situation in which the entire people run industry has arisen. This 'all the people run industry'

movement did more than bring big advances in output; it has also enabled large numbers of people to acquire industrial and technical training and to participate in physical labor..."

Liao Lu-yen, Minister of Agriculture, (Peking Review, Jan. 3, 1959) attributed the 1958 leap forward to "political leadership," the "mass line" and the "8-point charter" for agriculture. He thinks the half-step toward workers democracy made by the CCP constitutes a new discovery of how productive power can be raised through releasing the initiative of the masses. He wrote, "The full airing of views, great debates and dazibao [posting of opinions] -- all born in the rectification campaign of the whole party and people...these constitute a new form of socialist democracy and a new invention...The integration of cadres, masses and technicians...these are another new invention..."

The campaign against the "rightists" also contributed to new hope in revolutionary freedom -- at least in part. For while it was used to suppress critics from the left -- working class and student opposition to Chinese Stalinist policies -- it was also a move against bourgeois privileges, made necessary by the earlier Stalinist policy of "peaceful transition" to socialism. Instead of confiscating the property of the pitifully weak Chinese capitalist class, the CCP in its avowed non-revolutionary theory left that private enterprise intact. There then developed, side-by-side, new state-owned industry subject to economic planning and old private enterprise with which the state had to negotiate and contract business.

This private sector of Chinese economy lived like no other capitalist enterprise has ever lived. Individual capitalists were assured, thanks to the revolution, an expanding economy, with relatively stable prices, in which demand continuously exceeded supply. Their profits were guaranteed. Even when the conflict between these two sectors of the economy became intolerable and action had to be taken by the State, the capitalists, forced into "joint private-State" enterprise, were guaranteed profits directly in the form of interest.

This weak capitalist class, growing strong in the nourishing womb of planned economy was in a position to organize opposition to the State and press for its demands. And it did. In addition, it served as a provocation to workers struggles which the CCP feared even more. Workers can be asked to sacrifice for the future socialist society. But long hours of hard labor sit poorly beside bosses -- and bureaucrats -- growing richer and fatter.

Thus, according to the evidence supplied by the CCP leaders themselves, the revolutionary advances in production stem from the sharp turn against bureaucratic excesses and bourgeois privileges. The Chinese bureaucracy, I repeat, was frightened by the Hungarian revolution, by the impact it made on the workers and students in China, and by its own sense of isolation and estrangement from the working masses. The turn made by the regime toward curbing the unbridled growth of bureaucracy and toward raising the initiative of the masses has had dramatic results in production.

The Permanent Revolution

Some comrades tend to express the view that the permanent revolution has an objective logic that impels the CCP along a revolutionary course irrespective of false Stalinist policies. This theory goes something like this:

Didn't the CCP despite its opposition to a socialist perspective in China, nevertheless break with Stalin, expel the imperialists and organize a planned economy? This was the consequence of the specific relationship of forces in a backward country, an objective circumstance that made the Stalinist perspective of bourgeois democratic evolution quite impossible.

Didn't the CCP try to live in peaceful class collaboration with the weak capitalist class of China after it took the power? And wasn't it subsequently compelled to depart once again from its professed theories and confiscate the property of the private sector of economy?

And now, in reaction to the first manifestation of the political revolution in the Soviet orbit, hasn't the CCP undertaken to combat the growing gap between the state apparatus and the workers and peasants? Hasn't it found a "new invention" -- a pale, distorted, bureaucratic version of workers' democracy?

The trouble with this seemingly plausible picture is that it fails to grasp the active nature of the contradiction. At every stage the objective needs of the revolution collide with the reactionary, petty-bourgeois character of Stalinism. There is no one-sided, passive, cause-effect relation between these two poles -- Stalinism and the revolution. It is rather a relation of deep polar opposition. The revolution does not simply press Stalinism into its service; there is a sharp clash between the revolution in forward motion and Stalinism which hampers, thwarts, and menaces this forward motion. This does not prevent the advance of the revolution, but it does mean that the revolutionary advance takes place through this contradictory process. Stalinism, as the bearer of state power in China, endangers the revolution at every step.

Concretely, the central problem of the revolution in China today -- as in any undeveloped country where the proletariat comes to power -- is the problem of maintaining the alliance with the bulk of the population, the peasantry. How will the Commune decision affect this alliance?

In 1955 the CCP began its drive for collectivization. At that time we quite confidently refuted the hopeful imperialist prognostication of civil war because, if anything, the CCP policy proposed the change at too slow a pace. The peasant families were to enter the collective, receiving shares in the produce in proportion to the land formerly held privately. This would certainly stop the further growth of differentiation between rich and poor peasants. But it would not eliminate the difference among the peasants that had already developed. In addition other individual acquisitions of the better-off peasants were carried over into collectives, such as private ownership of domestic animals, food-bearing trees, etc.

This did not provide sufficient grounds for mass resistance to collectivization. But from a distance it was difficult to determine whether or not such a slow pace was necessary. In any event, apparently no further steps were taken to eliminate or reduce the inequality within the collectives that existed from their birth. To this inequality was added a differentiation between rich and poor collectives. Some move toward equalizing the terrible burdens that necessarily had to be born by the peasantry became increasingly urgent.

"Revolution" By Decree

In the first place the Commune decision has to be seen against this background. And it is to meet this problem primarily that we regard the Communes as an advance. But do not think for a moment that the CCP has suddenly shed its Stalinist character. Far from it. With all its "new inventions," its opposition to "bad airs," etc., the CCP didn't propose an orientation toward Commune formation, opening a discussion of such a perspective among its own cadre let alone the peasants. It operates by decree and the transformation was effected within a three-month period, despite the lack of material facilities, let alone political preparation.

The organization of Communes was therefore characterized from its inception by wild vacillations -- from plans made to plans postponed, retracted and forgotten. Even at this distance one could see that the CCP was at least succeeding in creating considerable confusion. Early this year 10,000 cadres were sent into the countryside to explain the Commune policy. A 5-month "check up" was organized to mobilize peasants to "air their views" and to check up on the leading personnel as to "loyalty to the Party."

The CCP's Objectives

It must be understood that the CCP's objectives are not at all identical with those of the poor peasants. The latter, at the very least, want equality of sacrifice demanded for future well-being. Many do not understand this. One encounters wishful thinkers, anxious to recapture in China illusions lost in the Soviet Union. For example, one reads in the Monthly Review, Jan. 14, 1959, how Marx called for the "abolition of wages" in his pamphlet "Value, Price and Profit," "if the Chinese communists have now accepted this advice in earnest," asks the Monthly Review, "can socialists chide them for it?"

Apparently the Monthly Review editors never read the August resolution of the CCP which called for the introduction of a wages system -- where possible. Imagine what disappointment awaited such people in the Dec. 23, 1958, issue of the Peking Review which asserted: "For the present after deducting items freely supplied, wage scales in the rural areas can be divided into 6 to 8 grades and the highest grade may be 4 or more times as much as the lowest grade." (An even larger difference in wage rates exists in the cities.)

What is the objective of the CCP? It is twofold. On the one hand, as the regime of a workers state in an undeveloped country and threatened by imperialist attack, it is under heavy pressure to industrialize as rapidly as possible. The surplus value for industrialization must come primarily from peasant production. This requires that the workers state find a way to raise the productivity of labor in agriculture and increase the surplus product. The State must get more from the peasant but it must be careful not to squeeze so hard that the alliance with the peasants is disrupted. This is a basic problem that any workers state regime in China would face.

On the other hand, as Stalinists, the CCP leadership tends to resolve this problem by means of administrative control -- by bureaucratic decisions, uncorrected by the democratic process. The CCP fears both the proletariat and poor peasantry and yields to them only for survival; while it is congenitally sensitive and conciliatory to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois pressures and moods. It wants

greater control of peasant production immediately to assure the use of one-third of the arable land for industrial crops. At it wants control of the product to more easily determine the consumption-accumulation rate.

Mao Tse-tung put the problem of the contradiction between the proletariat and peasantry in terms of the contradiction between two forms of property in his document "On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." He said, "It is a complicated problem to settle on a proper ratio between accumulation and consumption within that sector of socialist economy in which the means of production are owned by the whole people and that sector in which the means of production are collectively owned, as well as between these two sectors."

One solution to this complex problem would obviously be to eliminate collective property, putting all produce under the direct control of the State. A simple solution! But it neglects one thing: the different property forms are based on the differences between the classes -- the proletariat and the peasantry.

Again, petty-bourgeois romantics who adore revolutions from afar, were enthralled at the boldness, the daring of the CCP. A new road to socialism was being opened. China would not follow along the same course as the Soviet Union. The CCP was making its own contribution to "Marxism."

Unfortunately for Mao, the peasant is not so starry-eyed. He is wiley enough to know that "ownership by the whole people" means that the state takes the entire product and doles out subsistence as it deems necessary.

That State which formerly had to take its share of agricultural produce through taxation and bargaining over prices, would now be able to settle directly the complex problem of the rate of accumulation.

Unable to know by theory alone the stupidity of such a policy, nevertheless, the CCP was wise enough not to try to decree "people's ownership" immediately but threw it out as a "perspective." In its first resolution calling for the formation of Communes, the CCP cautiously said, "After the establishment of people's Communes, there is no need immediately to transform collective ownership into ownership by the people as a whole. It is better at present to maintain collective ownership to avoid unnecessary complications..." (Peking Review, Sept. 16, 1958).

By December the CCP had retreated so fast from its initial statements that a perspective that was merely "not immediate," became a perspective removed by "15, 20 or more years." (Peking Review, December 23, 1958.)

Does the "correction" of this error absolve us of the necessity to warn against this policy? Not at all. The Stalinists empirically adopted the policy and empirically retreated, either in the face of peasant opposition or pressure from their more realistic, hardheaded colleagues in the Soviet Union. What is to prevent other pressures or experience from inducing the Stalinists into stepping up the tempo of their plan to expropriate the collectives or Communes?

There was risk enough involved in the shift from collective ownership to Commune ownership. As a much larger unit, the Commune is more remote to the peasant family and much less subject to his control. For with all the democratic promises of the CCP, democracy can't really be exercised when labor demands

inevitably leave the peasant too weary to participate. And surely the peasant is aware of all this.

On top of this -- to throw out the threat of expropriating the Commune is to uselessly risk accomplishing the immediate task at hand -- the shift from collectives to Communes.

The L.A. draft resolution says nothing at all about the proposal to expropriate the Communes. Yet surely, this is the most dangerous proposal that has yet been made by the CCP in its agrarian policy. And it has never been abandoned.

However, Comrade Swabeck didn't ignore this basic question altogether. In his letter of March 17 (Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, Page 15), he said, "It is even possible to foresee the communes being the important class instruments for advance of socialist construction, i.e., from the initial stage of state property to genuine peoples property."

It is difficult to know just what this means. Initial property relations in agriculture -- after a brief passage through bourgeois relations -- was not state but collective property.

State property is not even the initial stage of Communes. However, it would seem that Comrade Swabeck favors the "people's property" proposal of the CCP. Presumably the contradiction between town and country in China is not to be overcome by means of technological achievements -- the mechanization of agricultural production -- but through changes in social relations. Comrade Swabeck assures us that "the peasants will become proletarianized and this will serve, in turn, to cement a firmer alliance between them and the working class in the urban centers." And there is "no reason to assume otherwise," he says.

But there is every reason to assume otherwise. Marxists have always regarded the peasantry as a petty-bourgeois class that must be provided with the material incentive for its rural labors in the form of ownership of the labor product -- at least until it is possible to mechanize production. Collective ownership of the agricultural product has classically been viewed as a transition form to help the peasants move from their property aspirations toward greater productivity and closer communal relations. The CCP's view of the peasantry cannot be cavalierly accepted without re-examining our past theoretical positions.

No one is more concerned for the progress and victory of the Chinese revolution that the Trotskyists. Key to this defense, however, is the strengthening of the alliance with the peasantry. Should the peasants be alienated from the workers state, great harm can be done to the planned economy and the difficult-enough task of industrialization. Should an open breach develop, only the imperialists will benefit -- as they did in the Tibet crisis. It is for this reason the policy of the Chinese Communist Party in agriculture deserves more serious attention.

The Stalinist theories held by the CCP leaders, and adapted by them to their special requirements as a bureaucratic caste in the Chinese workers state, are not academic questions. Under planned economy the role of leadership is a decisive factor. The Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country," and its corollary that socialism has already been established in China, can have the most disastrous consequences. Enthusiastic applause that glosses over these theoretical questions and avoids an analysis of the concrete problems involved will not help the Chinese workers and peasants nor educate the revolutionary vanguard for its tasks internationally.

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